

SD565
.U532
1972

INFORM AND INVOLVE



Forest Service - U. S. Department of Agriculture

February 1, 1972

LIBRARY

DEC 13 1978

LIBRARY COPY
ROCKY MT. FOREST & RANGE
EXPERIMENT STATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN STATION

INFORM AND INVOLVE

| | <u>Page</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| - THE OBJECTIVE ----- | 1 |
| - AUTHORITY FOR INFORM AND INVOLVE ----- | 2 |
| - FIVE PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS ----- | 3 |
| - ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES----- | 4 |
| - ACTION PLAN ----- | 5 |
| - I&I COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES ----- | 14 |
| - I&I TRAINING PROGRAM----- | 17 |
| - REVISED AND CONDENSED ----- | 18 |
| "A GUIDE TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING" | |

INFORM AND INVOLVE

THE OBJECTIVE

TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THE SCIENTIFIC,
SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ECONOMIC
FACTORS THAT RELATE TO LAND AND RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT. AND TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC
CONSTRUCTIVELY IN PROVIDING INFORMATION,
COMMENT AND POINTS OF VIEW THAT
WILL LEAD TO BETTER LAND AND RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.

AUTHORITY FOR INFORM AND INVOLVE

- (1) Presidential Executive Order 11514, March 5, 1970
(Excerpts)

Sec. 2. Responsibilities of Federal Agencies

---The heads of Federal agencies shall:...(b) develop procedures to ensure the fullest practicable provision of timely information and understanding of Federal plans and programs with environmental impact in order to obtain the views of interested parties.

- (2) Secretary's Memorandum No. 1695, Supplement 5
(Excerpts)

---Policy. The public is to be informed. The Department of Agriculture will expand, and whenever possible, improve procedures for providing information to the public and for obtaining and considering local, regional, and national views on matters relating to the environment.

- (3) Statement of Forest Service Objectives and Policy Guides,
"Framework for the Future"--Issued February 1970
(Excerpts)

---Objective: Involve the public in Forestry Policy and Program Formulation.

---Policy. Seek out and obtain local and national views in the process of policy and program formulation.

Discharge our responsibilities in ways that make our management processes visible and our responsible people accessible.

Consult with and seek cooperative action with agencies at all levels of Government, and with private groups and individuals, in programs for resource management and economic development.

- (4) National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
(Excerpts)

Sec. 2. Purpose

--To promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation.

ESTABLISHED
MAY 1969

FIVE PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Forest Service has a responsibility to the American people to assure that today's land and resource management decisions are based on facts and interwoven with the public involvement processes.
2. A successful forest land management policy for the Nation must include improved management of privately owned forest lands which comprise 59 percent of the total forested lands in the Nation.
3. Our National Forests must provide a balanced and continuous supply of goods and services to help meet the social, economic, and esthetic needs of the American people.
4. Continued research is vital to obtain efficiency in Forest resource production and use, and to develop environmental management techniques to protect and to enhance our environment.
5. Today's Forest management must include high priority for such values as scenery, air and water quality, recreation, open space, environmental quality, and the social well-being of man.

INFORM AND INVOLVE

ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility rests with the line officer. Responsibility for direction and coordination of the Inform and Involve effort is part of the Information and Education function within the National Forest System, and the comparable functions in Research and State and Private Forestry.

Inform and Involve Coordinators will be designated at each Region, Forest, Station, and Area. Names of those individuals so designated at the respective levels are to be sent to the I&I Coordinator, WO Division of Information and Education. The WO is to be kept informed of any changes in this assignment.

It should be pointed out that Inform and Involve is not a new I&E program but is rather a direction of emphasis that reflects current Forest Service policy. It will require the full support and participation of line, staff, and sub-staff personnel.

All of the traditional I&E functions have a role to play in Inform and Involve and should seek opportunities to bring emphasis to it as they carry out their normal programs.

Meeting the increased workload generated by Inform and Involve will have to be accomplished by priority judgments of the line officers.

ACTION PLAN

- I. Establish a procedure that will facilitate early identification of activities and issues that are of potential current interest at local, regional, and national levels for possible I&I action.
- II. Broaden communication with TV, Radio, and press contacts, and with media personalities, and provide them with increased opportunities for reporting on stories of potential interest to the public.
- III. Seek out opportunities for Forest Service officials to speak out on current issues, correct erroneous information, and explain programs.
- IV. Broaden contacts with groups, associations, and organizations to better Inform and Involve a wide range of the public on current programs, projects, and issues.
- V. Establish procedures to keep Forest Service employees better informed on current programs, policies, and issues.
- VI. Strengthen the role of Research in Inform and Involve.
- VII. Strengthen the role of State and Private Forestry in Inform and Involve.
- VIII. Improve capability for constructive public involvement.
- IX. Develop Inform and Involve training program.

I. Establish a procedure that will facilitate early identification of activities and issues that are of potential current interest at local, regional, and national levels for possible I&I action.

1. To make more effective use of I&E efforts, each Region, Forest, Station, and Area will designate a Study Team to identify current and potential problems as well as upcoming projects and programs that may be of interest to the public. This will be reviewed every six months. Responsibilities, target dates, and action plan will be identified for I&I action on each project.

2. All line officer staff will inform I&E of all new plans or new projects, changes in existing plans or projects, and newly developed problem areas.

3. I&E will develop plan for I&I priorities and advise line officers of need, timing, and extent of Inform and Involve efforts.

4. The early warning alert system will be used at all levels to alert management on matters of immediate interest. These alerts are to be routed through the I&I Coordinator or the Senior I&E official.

5. WO and RO will develop a training package in news and story identification that can be used in I&I training programs for all line, staff, and sub-staff.

6. Current Information personnel will visit field locations in search of information opportunities. The appropriate line officer will be alerted of such visits. Stories will not be released without prior consultation with line officers.

7. The I&I Coordinators at each Region, Forest, Station, and Area, and the I&I Coordinator at the WO Division of I&E will keep each other informed on projects, activities, programs, and issues that may provide information opportunities. This does not in any way restrict the need for continued I&E communications between the respective organizational levels. (Forest I&I Coordinators will transmit material through the RO).

II. Broaden communication with TV, Radio, and press contacts, and with media personalities, and provide them with increased opportunities for reporting on stories of potential interest to the public.

1. Establish schedules for visits to TV stations, radio stations, newspapers, and magazine offices in which we do not have broad and relative steady contact.

2. Before going, do research on types and number of contacts that may exist at any given office. Each contact has special values: news shows, public service, features, interviews, panel discussions, talk shows, disc jockeys, feature articles, editorials, womens pages, sports pages, column, etc.

3. Provide media outlets with information in form suited to their needs...visuals, tapes, background material, press releases, copies of speeches, policy statements, etc.

4. Alert media people of upcoming events such as opening of recreation areas, timber sales, research announcements, public involvement meetings, road completion, and newsworthy visitors.

5. Develop capability to provide immediate statements or brief interviews by appropriate officials on items of hot news value.

6. Encourage media people to cover stories on the ground. Provide them with background information and arrange for field contacts.

7. Participate in professional media associations such as national, State, and local press associations, national and State associations of Broadcasters, Sigma Delta Chi, Theta Sigma Phi, American Society of Newspaper Editors, Outdoor Writers Association of America, etc.

III. Seek out opportunities for Forest Service officials to speak out on current issues, correct erroneous information, and explain programs.

1. Alert media when Forest Service officials would like opportunity to speak out on particular issue, or to correct misinformation.

2. Respond to misstatements, errors of fact, or statements used out of context that are reported in the media. Do not respond to statements of opinion and do not attempt to respond to every occasion when a relatively minor or repeated misstatement appears.

3. Seek out opportunities for Forest Service officials to speak out on issues or programs at meetings of all types. Distribute talks broadly when appropriate.

4. Develop opportunities for Forest Service officials to take part in public panel discussions on TV, Radio, or at meetings arranged by others.

5. Prepare speeches, articles, and press releases that deal directly with current problems of forest land management in a positive no-nonsense manner and obtain broadest possible exposure.

IV. Broaden contacts with groups, associations, and organizations to better Inform and Involve a wide range of the public on current programs, projects, and issues.

1. Identify and develop contacts with groups, associations, and organizations, that have an interest in outdoor land management. The five basic categories to work with are: Environmentalists, Resource Dependent Industries, Recreationists, Governmental Agencies, and Concerned Citizens.

2. Environmentalists, Resource Dependent Industries, Recreationists, and other Governmental Agencies can be identified rather easily since we have worked with many in the past. However, we should seek to expand our contacts to new groups within these categories.

3. Concerned citizen groups, while having no direct special interest areas, are dedicated to the enhancement of their national heritage, and every effort should be provided to Inform and Involve them in outdoor land management. Examples of these groups are: Women's groups, Academic groups, Civic organizations, young adults, professional societies, and Forest Service retirees.

4. Inform all groups on a continuing basis with press releases, background statements, and publications on all current interests and issues, and seek their comments.

5. Keep all interest groups fully informed of the needs and demands of others to encourage a more balanced understanding of forest land management.

6. Encourage all groups and key opinion leaders to speak out and let their feelings be known on various policies, proposals, programs and projects---especially those who have not developed solidified positions on particular issues based on strong special interest.

V. Establish procedures to keep Forest Service employees better informed on current programs, policies, and issues.

1. All line officers will encourage efforts to improve internal communications systems and the free flow of information as a means to upgrade management coordination, employee understanding, and information opportunities.

2. Those who have the I&E responsibility are to develop systems to better inform project leaders, project staff technicians, and clerical personnel.

3. Determine feasibility, and if appropriate, install facsimile phone transmission system in WO, Region, Station, and Area I&E Divisions to improve urgent internal communications. (A task force is being established to review equipment available. All equipment contained shall be compatible with that recommended by task force.)

4. Develop video tape capability for media training and internal communications. (The capability will be of limited nature. A task force has been established to review available equipment and determine type best suited to our needs. All units, when they are able to purchase equipment, shall obtain equipment which is fully compatible with that recommended by the task force. A training package is being developed on the use of this video tape equipment.)

5. Inform field units and ask for comments, on new projects or programs that will involve them while plans are still under consideration.

VI. Strengthen the role of research in Inform and Involve.

1. While Research must maintain its professional integrity and not take sides in policy issues, it does have a responsibility to inform the public on research results and on-going research activity. These may or may not have bearing on current issues.

2. Prepare written background papers on selected technical research reports in layman's terms, to improve opportunities for better public understanding, and to speed practical application of research results.

3. Provide opportunities to inform the public about on-going research projects that may have general interest.

4. Provide opportunities for the public, resource related industries and land managers, to comment on research problem selection at the earliest stage of planning.

5. Seek out opportunities for press, radio, and TV reporting of research results that relate to major areas of current public interest.

6. Join with Regions and others in maintaining liaison with other researchers and with the academic community on matters relating to forest resource production and use, resource management, and environmental protection.

7. Take part in public involvement processes to provide scientific information that may be helpful to the public and to land managers in considering land management decisions.

VII. Strengthen the role of State and Private Forestry in Inform and Involve.

1. Provide State and local governments and regional planning units with advance information on developing management plans and on upcoming programs or projects in which they may be concerned.

2. Through the State Foresters, provide private land owners with information on developing management plans and on upcoming programs or projects in which they may be concerned.

3. Establish procedures to obtain comments, suggestions, and alternative proposals on land management decisions from State and local governments, regional planning units, and private landowners.

4. Participate in analysis of public involvement input on matters that have bearing on State and private activities.

5. Disseminate research results to State and local governments, regional planning units, and private landowners. Utilize media to speed awareness of these results and their potential application on the ground.

6. Provide information to the general public through all appropriate media on progress and status of on-going cooperative planning efforts, cooperative programs, and cooperative projects.

7. Participate in public involvement meetings that have a bearing on State and private activities.

VIII. Improve capability for constructive public involvement.

1. Develop guide and training program for planning, organizing, and conducting public meetings.

2. Utilize Research, S&PF, and Forest Service staff officers in public involvement meetings when appropriate.

3. Include I&E personnel in the review and analysis of material obtained through public involvement.

4. Keep all media informed before, during, and after public involvement meetings.

5. Provide WO I&I Coordinator with advance schedule of public involvement meetings and brief explanation of purpose of meeting. Recognizing that there will be many Forest Service public involvement meetings of a relatively minor nature, advance information will be provided to the WO only on those meetings in which the RO has some involvement.

6. Suggestions for public involvement can be found on Page 18, as contained in "A Guide to Public Involvement in Decision Making" (Revised and condensed January 1972).

I&I Coordinator Responsibilities on Washington Level

1. Basic planing and direction of the I&I Program at the WO is the responsibility of the Director of the Division of I&E. The I&I Coordinator for the WO is Tony Staed, operating under the Assistant Director for Current Information.
2. Provide field offices maximum I&I services available through the WO, and the Department.
3. Inform Region, Station, and Area I&I Coordinators of current potential problems or opportunities developing at the national level.
4. Maintain personal contact with Region, Station, and Area I&I Coordinators.
5. Develop monthly travel schedule of key WO personnel going to the field and coordinate plans with Region, Station, or Area for setting up media contacts as requested.
6. Develop schedule with target dates for expanding personal contacts with national press, television, and radio outlets, and with Washington, D.C. media.
7. Identify and train Forest Service personnel who have potential for working with media or public groups.
8. Participate in interregional training and assistance details with Regions, Stations, and Areas on media and public involvement projects.
9. Keep a current schedule of upcoming public involvement meetings which are of sufficient importance to require participation of some type by Region, Station, or Area office.
10. Provide the field with national TV, Radio spots, and printed matter for mass distribution to inform and involve the public.

I&I Coordinator Responsibilities on Region, Area, and Station Levels

1. Take part in Study Team's identification of current and potential problems and opportunities for I&I Action Program.
2. Complete initial Action Program by June 1, 1972.
3. Prepare and make available I&I training program.
4. Maintain personal contact with Forest I&I Coordinators and Washington Office I&I Coordinator.
5. Provide key spokesmen from WO with background material on major interest areas for media coverage and key contacts, when visiting Region, Area, or Station.
6. Develop a schedule with target dates for expanding personal media contacts.
7. Identify and train Forest Service personnel who have potential for working with media or public groups.
8. Implement a method to share Inform and Involve expertise through inter-Regional training and assistance details between Regions, Stations, and Areas on media and public involvement projects.
9. Coordinate early warning alerts from WO, Region, Forest, Area, and Stations.
10. Advise WO of possible Regional, Area, or Station developments that may have a potential for national I&I exposure.
11. Provide WO I&I Coordinator with earliest possible advance notice of public involvement meetings that are of sufficient importance to require participation of some type by Region, Station, or Area offices. Include tentative dates, and background information of no more than one page.

I&I Coordinator Responsibilities on Forest Level

1. Take part in Study Team's identification of current and potential problems and opportunities for I&I Action Program and transmit to RO.
2. Complete initial Action Program by May 1, 1972.
3. Make I&I training program available to all line and staff, and identify potential spokesmen for various Forest projects and programs.
4. Identify and train Forest Service personnel who have potential for working with media or public groups.
5. Maintain personal contact with Regional I&I Coordinator.
6. Provide key spokesmen from Region, Area, or Station with background material on major interest areas for media coverage and key contacts when visiting forest or project levels.
7. Develop a schedule with target dates for expanding personal media contacts.
8. Participate in training and assistance details on media and public involvement projects.
9. Coordinate early warning alerts to or from Forest.
10. Advise RO of possible Forest developments that may have a potential for Regional I&I exposure.
11. Provide Region I&I Coordinator with earliest possible advance notice of planned public involvement meetings, including tentative dates and background information of no more than one page.

IX. Develop Inform and Involve Training Program.

A basic training program has been developed to help Forest Service personnel carry out the Inform and Involve program. This basic program, prepared at the WO, should be expanded upon at Regions, Stations, and Areas to carry out their I&I training responsibilities.

The approach of the training is how-to-do-it. The package consists of materials developed from all levels of the Forest Service. It covers fundamentals as well as the finer points of media and public involvement.

- The basic categories are:
- (1) Inform & Involve Program
 - (2) Public Meetings
 - (3) Newspapers & Magazines
 - (4) Radio
 - (5) Television .

" A GUIDE TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING"

(Revised and Condensed, Jan. 1972)

When to Seek Public Involvement

Determining which decisions should require public involvement, and the extent of involvement necessary, are the initial factors to be considered in carrying out the public involvement process. There are a few instances where public involvement is required by law, such as the requirement to hold formal public hearings for consideration of new wilderness areas. For the most part, however, the decision as to which proposals or projects will require public involvement, and its extent, will rest with a Forest Service officer.

Proposed actions for which we are preparing an "Environmental Statement" for submission to the Environmental Quality Council will require public involvement. The decision to submit an "Environmental Statement" is recognition that the issue is one which has major impact on the environment.

Our multiple use plans offer an excellent opportunity to obtain public involvement at an early stage. We will seek extensive public involvement in preparing these plans, using informal hearings as one of the methods of doing so. A synopsis of oral testimony will be filed with submitted written statements. A summary of the proceedings will be prepared and made available upon request to attendees and other interested parties.

Forest Service officers must make countless decisions which affect the environment to lesser degrees, and decisions which involve areas of controversy because of conflicting desires of various interest groups. No clear-cut guide can be established for these broad areas of decision making. Most decisions on whether to seek public involvement will be based on an awareness of public interests and attitudes at the local, regional, and national levels. Projects and decisions likely to be of special interest or concern to any group should include some degree of public involvement so that all possible alternatives can be presented.

The key to this question is "awareness," and the key to awareness is "listening." This means a lot more than listening to individuals and groups that come to you. It means keeping fully informed as to the attitudes, interests, and desires of local, regional, and national publics. It means seeking out and listening to individuals and groups which may have traditionally opposed certain aspects of Forest Service management. It means spending as much time and effort at listening as we do at informing. It means that every technique and medium that we use to inform and involve the public should have built into it a procedure for eliciting public response.

"Awareness" is not something that can be turned on only when there is a need for obtaining public involvement for a specific project. It requires a continuing commitment to keep fully informed on current public interests and attitudes.

In addition to the need for public awareness, there is also need for awareness of the interests of Federal, State, and local agencies. Our projects and proposals often have considerable impact on the activities of such agencies. Circulation of draft project plans to Federal, State, and local agencies at an early stage will give us the benefit of their thinking and enable us to develop thorough and better coordinated proposals for public consideration.

The information, education, and interpretive function provides the primary means by which the public is informed. It also provides the primary means by which a Forest Service officer can be kept "aware" of public attitudes and interests. If we are to be successful in constructively involving the public in our decision-making processes, the information, education, and interpretive function must provide the expertise upon which public involvement judgments can be made.

Attitudes Conducive to Successful Public Involvement

If we are to be successful in obtaining maximum value out of the public involvement process, we must enter into it with attitudes that encourage the free interchange of facts and opinions in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual concern. Among these attitudes are the following.

1. Recognize that public involvement is an essential part of decision making since it can enable the decision maker to render a better decision.
2. Discard any notion that actions which will affect environmental quality or the public interest can be judged only by professionals. Though a proposed action may be professionally correct, public concern may well outweigh professional considerations and justify proposal modification.
3. Be willing to accept criticism of yourself or the organization with a positive rather than a defensive attitude. If the criticism is clearly unjustified, do not glorify it by an over defensive reaction. Meet such criticism with well substantiated facts that set the record straight. Wherever criticism has any validity, show a willingness to accept it in considering possible changes.

Recognize that record keeping in public involvement and decision making is essential. It provides opportunity for full review of all factors to be considered before the decision is reached and serves as a vital record if the decision is later challenged.

When a controversial topic is raised during the public involvement process, it is desirable to take a neutral position. Public involvement cannot be successful in an atmosphere of confrontation. Remember that the objective of public involvement is to obtain information on which a better decision can be based, not to defend a position that has already been taken.

Give as much consideration to the opinions of those who may have opposed or questioned Forest Service policies in the past as you would to those who have supported them. Every interest group has a right to have its points of view considered. Recognize that success in achieving support for a decision reached through the public involvement process may well depend on whether we have considered the opinions of all interest groups. Keep in mind that all interest groups are champions of some aspect of good resource management. Disregarding the concern of specific groups on one issue because of extreme controversy may well weaken their desire to get involved on other issues in which they could make valuable contributions.

Do not feel that you, as a Forest Service officer, are in any way abdicating responsibilities in making management decisions because you have involved the public as a factor in reaching these decisions. The final decision is still up to you.

Those who work in Research should recognize that at some point in time it may be desirable to seek public comment on the design and operation of research projects that may arouse the concern of the public at large.

Recognize that public involvement requires that it must be sought out before a decision has been reached. There is no quicker way to alienate the public than to ask for their comments after a decision has been made.

Once a decision has been reached by a Forest Service officer, the public and all interested parties should be immediately informed of the decision. Since it may not be possible to incorporate all public involvement contributions in a decision, it is imperative that announcement of the decision include an explanation of how it was reached. Receive criticism of the decision graciously and stress the fact that the decision made was judged to be the best possible based on all available information.

Techniques for Obtaining Public Involvement

The following commonly used techniques have value for gaining public contributions to decision making as well as for imparting information or developing understanding. Each has advantages and limitations. The Forest Service officer must use those techniques that will fit the problem at hand and assure (1) decision quality, (2) adequate public involvement, (3) expeditious handling of the public business, and (4) public acceptance of the program. The techniques are not listed by priority. Each situation requires using those which are best suited to meet the specific need.

1. Formal Public Hearings. These require a verbatim transcript and the development of a hearing record. The hearing record provides all presented information pertinent to the proposal. Since the record is costly to produce, tends to slow down the decision-making process, and provides information that can be obtained through less complicated and less costly methods, the formal hearing will not be used except where required by Congressional directives or where the decision-making level is higher than the region.
2. Public Meetings. Open public meetings allow participation by a wide cross-section of interested people. Their effectiveness in meeting public involvement objectives will depend largely on how they are conducted. These are some of the factors that should be considered:
 - a. The moderator or chairman of a public meeting must remain neutral and not express specific opinions. Spokesmen of Forest Service positions at public meetings need not always be line officers, but may be subject matter specialists well qualified in public presentation. However, the responsible line officer or his designee, should always be present.
 - b. The stage should be set with a presentation of facts upon which the decision can be based. In such a presentation, a group of alternative solutions with or without their pros and cons may well be introduced. Clear guidelines, time limits, and "rules of the debates" should be presented to those giving presentations well in advance of the meeting so that all have adequate time for preparation, and to assure that no one point of view is out of balance in time or emphasis with others due to meeting structure. Interested observers at the meeting should be free to ask questions of the panelists or the Forest Service officer, and to make their views known.

- c. While it is advantageous to allow questions to individuals who have made statements on the floor for the purpose of seeking clarification, such questions must be channeled through the meeting chairman. This will reduce the tendency of emotional and unsubstantiated statements by allowing such statements to be challenged from the floor.
- d. Public meetings should be held in large cities as well as in local towns so that interested urban people will have an opportunity for comment.
- e. Public meetings must not only be held well in advance of the time when decision is needed, but they should be well advertised beforehand so that those who are interested will have sufficient time to prepare material for their inputs. Advanced advertisement of a public meeting should specifically state the type program or project proposed and its location.
- f. Public meetings always require follow-up. Decisions must be made known through letter and press releases to concerned and interested individuals or groups and to the general public.
- g. Although verbatim transcripts of the meeting are not desirable, carefully kept notes are essential.
- h. Public meetings should always provide for correspondence from those who cannot personally participate, and from those who wish to make their recommendations known after they have heard all sides.
- i. Meeting location must be carefully chosen to allow maximum participation of those concerned with the issue.
- j. Timing of the meeting is important, since many interested individuals can be available only during certain hours of the day. For this reason, it is desirable to have split sessions, with one during regular business hours, and another during normal off-duty hours so that all can be heard.
- k. Widespread notice of public meetings is essential, since many have a deep interest in Forest Service decisions, and may be located a distance from the area or may be away from the area at the time. What may appear to be local decisions often have national or international repercussions.

3. Informal Small Group Meetings. These may be invitational meetings with concerned and interested individuals or groups. Usually a series of meetings is necessary to cover different geographical areas or the variety of groups with whom it is necessary to meet. Attendance should be kept small enough to allow informality and thorough discussion. A public notice should be made of at least some of the meetings to assure that they are accessible to everyone who is interested. The subject matter covered and the format of the meeting should avoid allowing people to immediately polarize on the controversial issue, but instead they should deal with the basic considerations which are involved. Informal meetings are especially productive if they are utilized early in the decision-making process, preferably while the Forest Service official is gathering information and still developing alternatives. It is a technique which allows people who are concerned to participate in the study and have a meaningful input at a time when informed points of view are most helpful.
4. Advisory Committees. Advisory Committees are fully discussed in the Forest Service Manual. The background of knowledge and the understanding of policies and programs of an existing committee can provide sound advice. It should be representative of a wide range of interested groups. Advisory committees can be very effective as a sounding board for Forest, Research, and State and Private proposals, and as an indicator of public attitudes and interests.
5. Ad Hoc Committees. A careful selection of committee members should assure a fair representation. Such committees would be dissolved when the study of and recommendations for a specific issue are completed. Committee recommendations can be by majority, consensus, or by the expression of individual points of view. Extreme points of view are often moderated through committee discussion, but unanimity should not be expected on most issues. Selection of ad hoc committees for anything less than critically important issues places a great burden on the individuals or the groups who carry their salaries and expenses, and upon the time of the individuals involved.
6. Advice Seeking Visits with Keymen. Key individuals in tune with the attitude of the community and knowledgeable about the issues involved can provide worthwhile counsel in the decision-making process. Counsel from several such individuals offers some of the same opportunities as ad hoc committees, but lacks the advantage of interchange of ideas among the committee members. Care must be exercised to avoid too close a relationship with a few selected individuals and over-looking opportunities for broad solicitation of public points of view. Discussion of issues with key people may very well bring about the same high quality decision, but it lacks the assurance that other members of the public will not feel that they have been left out of the process.

7. Letter Request for Comments. This approach can be extremely effective when the individuals contacted have the requisite knowledge upon which to base sound advice. Letters should be addressed to a broad representation of interests. They need not be limited to the local area, but can be at the State or national level if necessary. This form of solicitation may be used with other techniques to assure good decisions and a public feeling of involvement. Follow-up is essential.

8. Utilizing the Forum Provided by Other Organizations. This is useful if the organization is willing to listen to proponents of various alternatives rather than to a single point of view. The forum of governmental organizations such as County Boards of Supervisors, Planning Commissions, and Legislative Committees, may be useful for this purpose so long as there is a clear understanding with the chairman in advance.

A format wherein the Forest Service officer makes an opening statement with planned speakers following to present different views is probably to be preferred. Or the opening statement can be followed by audience response with emphasis on questions and answers. The Forest Service officer should be completely familiar with the issue and competent to handle questions without indicating a bias toward one or another alternative. When using the forum of other organizations, advance notice should be given and public participation sought.

9. Serving on Local and Regional Committees concerned with use of forest resources for the economic, social, or recreational benefit of a particular community or area provides an excellent opportunity for Forest Service participation in area or community planning. It can also be a good source of information on current attitudes and interests of local and regional people. Thus, it provides an opportunity to gain greater awareness through listening.

10. Use of Non-Forest Service Groups to Conduct Studies of Forest Service Programs and On-the-Ground Activities. The general public may question the validity of internally conducted studies. Occasional outside studies, conducted at our request by respected non-Forest Service professionals or leading university scholars, could help dispel such scepticism. However, it must be recognized that outside studies conducted by people of this caliber should result in Forest Service action in response to the findings within a reasonable period. Such studies should be initiated early in the stage of formulating alternatives, and should not involve issues which have already caused polarization of positions.